



*Sacrifice at Pearl Harbor*

At 7:49 AM on Sunday, December 7, 1941, 183 Japanese dive- and torpedo-bombers, accompanied by Zero long-range fighter escorts, launched the first of two attacks against the American base at Pearl Harbor. A second wave of 168 Japanese aircraft arrived at 9 AM. Eighteen operational warships, including four battleships, were sunk or heavily damaged, 188 aircraft were destroyed, and 2,403 Americans were killed, among them 68 civilians, and 1178 more were wounded.



*Attack on Pearl Harbor*

The attack solved President Franklin D. Roosevelt's most pressing problem: how to overcome the American public's opposition to involvement in the war that had been going on in Europe for the previous sixteen months (on the eve of Pearl Harbor, polls indicated that 80% of the people did not want the United States to enter the war as



*USS SHAW exploding*



*View from Pier 1010 with USS Shaw & Nevada Burning*

an active participant). Roosevelt received overwhelming support when he asked Congress for a declaration of war against Japan. The grass-roots America First movement

quietly disbanded. On December 11th, Germany and Italy declared war against the United States. American resolve to "defeat the dictators" was near unanimous.

## The Official Coverup and Conflicting Investigations

To head off congressional and public criticism, Roosevelt hastily appointed a special commission to investigate the attack. Chaired by Associate Supreme Court Justice Owen J. Roberts, a leading



News

supporter of the pro-interventionist Committee to Aid America by Aiding the Allies, the President had no fear that the commission would do anything to compromise the spirit of unity that now prevailed. Justice Roberts completed his report on Friday, January 23, 1942. The Administration released it to the public in time for the Sunday newspapers. Key members of the Washington political and military establishment were absolved of any blame. The fault, they said, lay with Admiral Kimmel and General Short.

The Navy Court of Inquiry, headed by Admiral Orin G. Murfin, met from July 24 to September 27, 1944. They concluded that Admiral Harold R. Stark, the Chief of Naval Operations, had failed to provide Admiral Kimmel all of the information possessed in Washington, thereby denying the Hawaii command a more complete picture of the situation. Kimmel was exonerated. His plans were judged "sound," but were dependent on "advance knowledge that an attack was to be expected". And given his limited military resources, Kimmel had conducted long-range aerial reconnaissance appropriate to the intelligence he had been given and the number of aircraft available.

Lt. General George Grunert chaired the Army Pearl Harbor Board, which met from July 20 to October 20, 1944. Evidence from 151 witnesses was collected in Washington DC, San Francisco, and Hawaii. While the Board was critical of General Short, for the first time attention was directed toward General George Marshall and the War Department. Marshall was censured for failing to keep Short fully apprised of the deteriorating state of US-Japanese relations; of failing to correct Short's "sabotage alert" preparations at Pearl Harbor (US aircraft were bunched wing-tip to wing-tip on December 7th, because Washington had told Short to guard against sabotage. Had he been alerted to a possible air attack, the planes would have been scattered and sheltered in revetments to guard against bomb blast); of failing to send critical information to Short on the evening of December 6th and the morning of December 7th; of failing to determine if the state of readiness at Pearl Harbor was commensurate with the potential threats to the base's security. General Leonard Gerow, the Chief of the Army's War Plans Division, was also reprimanded. He had failed, the Board concluded, to keep the Hawaiian command informed about Japanese moves that were known in Washington; of failing to make the November 27th warning clear and concise; and of failing to see that joint Army-Navy plans were properly effected.

## **The Official History was Immediately Challenged and Exposed as Propaganda**

In September 1944, John T. Flynn launched Pearl Harbor revisionism when he published a forty-six page booklet entitled *The Truth about Pearl Harbor*. Flynn argued that Roosevelt and his cronies had been plotting war against Japan at least since January 1941. The Administration continued needlessly to provoke the Japanese government throughout the rest of the year, and on November 26, 1941, delivered a diplomatic ultimatum that no government could possibly accept (that Japan withdraw all troops from China and Indochina, effectively abrogating its treaty with Germany and Italy).

In early 1945, a thirty-year-old historian, William L. Neumann, published a brochure, *The Genesis of Pearl Harbor*. He reviewed the diplomatic background to the outbreak of the war and pointed out how the Roosevelt Administration had launched an economic war against Japan in the summer and fall of 1941. Neumann concluded that both sides were responsible, but that Washington could not have been surprised by the attack at Pearl Harbor.

In his discussion of "The Night Before Pearl Harbor" Flynn charged that the story given the public about Roosevelt being surprised by the attack on Pearl Harbor was "utterly fraudulent". Based on the intercepted messages, FDR knew that hostilities were soon to commence. What "warnings" were finally sent to Hawaii

were deliberately delivered by the slowest possible means as a face-saving measure.

Flynn went on to show how blame for the disaster was cleverly shifted from Washington to the Hawaiian commanders, Kimmel and Short. He further discussed how the fleet had come to be based at Pearl Harbor over the objections of Kimmel's predecessor, Admiral Richardson, (and then by Kimmel himself) who was convinced that any ships berthed there would be an easy target.

In his summary of the tragedy, Flynn reiterated his view that Roosevelt had decided to go to war with Japan, despite his public pledges to the American people not to make their sons fight in foreign wars, and that he had promised the British to fight long before December 7th.

## Timeline of Infamy

September 27, 1940: The Japanese signed a defensive treaty with Germany and Italy, the Tri Partite alliance, that declared if anyone attacked one of the three the other two would come to their aide.

1940: FDR ordered the fleet transferred from the West Coast to its exposed position in Hawaii and ordered the fleet remain stationed at Pearl Harbor over complaints by its commander Admiral Richardson that there was inadequate protection from air attack and no protection from torpedo attack. Richardson felt so strongly that he twice disobeyed orders to berth his fleet there and he raised the issue personally with FDR in October and he was soon after replaced. His successor, Admiral Kimmel, also brought up the same issues with FDR in June 1941.

1940: American cryptographers broke the Japanese Purple code, used for all communications between embassies and consulates.

October 7, 1940: Navy analyst McCollum wrote an 8-point memo on how to force Japan into war with the US. Beginning the next day FDR began to put them into effect and all eight were eventually accomplished.

January 1941: Roosevelt dispatched his closest advisor, Harry Hopkins, to meet British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Hopkins told Churchill: "The President is determined that we [the United States and England] shall win the war together. Make no mistake about it. He has sent me here to tell you that at all costs and by all means he will carry you through, no matter what happens to him — there is nothing he will not do so far as he has human power."

William Stevenson noted in *A Man Called Intrepid* that American-British military staff talks began that same month under "utmost secrecy," which, he clarified, "meant preventing disclosure to the American public."

Tyler Kent, a code clerk at the US embassy in London, discovered secret dispatches between Roosevelt and Churchill, which revealed that FDR – despite contrary campaign promises – was determined to engage America in the war. Kent smuggled some of the documents out of the embassy, hoping to alert the American public – but was caught and, with US government approval, was tried in a secret British court and confined to a British prison until the war's end.

February 11, 1941: FDR proposed sacrificing 6 cruisers and 2 carriers at Manila to get into war. Navy Chief Stark objected.

March 1941: FDR sold munitions and convoyed them to belligerents in Europe — both acts of war and both violations of international law – the Lend-Lease Act.

June 23, 1941: Advisor Harold Ickes wrote FDR a memo the day after Germany invaded the Soviet Union, "There might develop from the embargoing of oil to Japan such a situation as would make it not only possible but easy to get into this war in an effective way. And if we should thus indirectly be brought in, we would avoid the criticism that we had gone in as an ally of communistic Russia." Two days later, FDR froze all Japanese assets in the US, cutting off their main supply of oil and forcing them into war with the US. Intelligence information was withheld from Hawaii from this point forward.

August 14, 1941: At the Atlantic Conference, Churchill noted the "astonishing depth of Roosevelt's intense desire for war." Churchill cabled his cabinet "(FDR) obviously was very determined that they should come in."

October 16, 1941: Secretary of War Henry Stimson wrote in his diary: "We face the delicate question of the diplomatic fencing to be done so as to be sure Japan is put into the wrong and makes the first bad move – overt move." On November 25, the day before the ultimatum was sent to Japan's ambassadors, Stimson wrote in his diary: "The question was how we should maneuver them [the Japanese] into the position of firing the first shot...."

October 18, 1941: A diary entry by Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes read: "For a long time I have believed that our best entrance into the war would be by way of Japan."

[During World War II's early days, FDR offered numerous provocations to Germany: freezing its assets, shipping 50 destroyers to Britain, and depth-charging U-boats. The Germans did not retaliate, however. They knew America's entry into World War I had shifted the balance of power against them, and they shunned a repeat of that scenario. FDR therefore switched his focus to Japan, knowing that if Japan went to war with the United States, Germany and Italy would be compelled to declare war on America – thus entangling us in the European conflict by the back door.]

December 2, 1941: Commander of the Combined Imperial Fleet Yamamoto radioed the attack fleet in plain (uncoded) Japanese "Climb Niitakayama 1208" (December 8 Japanese time, December 7 Hawaii time).

[In 1979 the NSA released 2,413 JN-25 cryptographic orders of the 26,581 intercepted by US between Sept 1 and Dec 4, 1941. The NSA says "We know now that they contained important details concerning the existence, organization, objective, and even the whereabouts of the Pearl Harbor Strike Force."]

December 7, 1941: 1:50 PM Washington time, Harry Hopkins was the only person with FDR when he received the news of the attack by telephone, and wrote that FDR was unsurprised and expressed "great relief". Eleanor Roosevelt wrote about December 7th in *This I Remember*, that FDR became "in a way more serene". In the NY Times Magazine of October 8, 1944 she wrote: "December 7 was...far from the shock it proved to the country in general. We had expected something of the sort for a long time."

December 8, 1941: In a conversation with his speech writer Rosenman, FDR "emphasized that Hitler was still the first target, but he feared that a great many Americans would insist that we make the war in the Pacific at least equally important with the war against Hitler."

Later, Jonathan Daniels, administrative assistant and press secretary to FDR said, "The blow was heavier than he had hoped it would necessarily be...But the risks paid off; even the loss was worth the price..."

### **The McCollum Memo – A strategy for Entrapping Japan**

The McCollum memo, also known as the Eight Action Memo was a memorandum, dated October 7, 1940 (more than a year before the Pearl Harbor attack), was written by Lieutenant Commander Arthur H.



McCollum, who “provided the president with intelligence reports on [Japan]... [and oversaw] every intercepted and decoded Japanese military and diplomatic report destined for the White House” in his capacity as director of the Office of Naval Intelligence’s Far East Asia section. It was sent to Navy Captains Dudley Knox, who agreed with the actions described within the memo, and Walter Stratton Anderson.

The memo outlined the general situation of several nations in World War II and recommended an eight-part course of action for the United States to take in regards to the Japanese Empire in the South Pacific, suggesting the United States provoke Japan into committing an “overt act of war”. The memo illustrates several people in the Office of Naval Intelligence promoted the idea of goading Japan into war: “It is not believed that in the present state of political opinion the United States government is capable of declaring war against Japan without more ado [...] If by [the elucidated eight-point plan] Japan could be led to commit an overt act of war, so much the better.”

## **Warnings & Foreknowledge**

General Elliott R. Thorpe’s (1897-1989) military career encompassed two world wars, the reconstruction of Japan, and a tour of duty in post-war Thailand. He stood guard in the Hall of Mirrors in Versailles when the World War I treaty was signed on June 28, 1919. In 1945 he was on the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay when the Japanese surrendered to General Douglas MacArthur. He may have been one of the last living survivors of both ceremonies. While these were momentous and singular events, General Thorpe’s unheeded warning about the Pearl Harbor attack of December 7, 1941 was arguably his most memorable moment. Serving as a military attaché in Dutch-controlled Java (Netherlands Indies) in 1941 when the Dutch broke a Japanese diplomatic code, Thorpe was informed that intercepted messages referred to planned Japanese attacks on Hawaii, the Philippines and Thailand. He immediately cabled the information to Washington, but this warning was ignored. A week later the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor.

Copies of decrypted Japanese Purple code diplomatic messages were promptly delivered in locked pouches to President Roosevelt and the secretaries of State, War, and Navy. They also went to Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall and to the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Harold Stark. However, although three Purple decoding machines were allotted to Britain, none was sent to Pearl Harbor. Thus Kimmel and Short, the Hawaiian commanders, were at the mercy of Washington for feedback. A request for their own decoding machine was rebuffed.

Naval intelligence intercepted and translated numerous Japanese naval dispatches, some clearly revealing that Pearl Harbor had been targeted. The most significant was the following, sent by Admiral Yamamoto to the Japanese First Air Fleet on November 26, 1941:

“The task force, keeping its movement strictly secret and maintaining close guard against submarines and aircraft, shall advance into Hawaiian waters, and upon the very opening of hostilities shall attack the main force of the United States fleet and deal it a mortal blow. The first air raid is planned for the dawn of x-day. Exact date to be given by later order.”

Early in 1941 Congressman Martin Dies’ Committee came into possession of a strategic map which gave clear proof of the intentions of the Japanese to make an assault on Pearl Harbor. The strategic map was prepared by the Japanese Imperial Military Intelligence Department. He wrote: “As soon as I received the document I telephoned Secretary of State Cordell Hull and told him what I had. Secretary Hull directed me not to let anyone know about the map and stated that he would call me as soon as he talked to President Roosevelt. In about an hour he telephoned to say that he had talked to Roosevelt and they agreed that it would be very serious if any information concerning this map reached the news services.... I told him it was a grave responsibility to withhold such vital information from the public. The Secretary assured me that he and Roosevelt considered it essential to national defense.”

The US was warned by, at least, the governments of Britain, Netherlands, Australia, Peru, Korea and the Soviet Union that a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor was coming. All important Japanese codes were broken. FDR and Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall and others knew the attack was coming, allowed it and covered up their knowledge. It's significant that both the chief of OP-20-G Safford and Friedman of Army SIS, the two people who knew what we decoded, said that FDR knew Pearl Harbor was going to be attacked.

J. Edgar Hoover told his friends in early 1942 that FDR had known about the Pearl Harbor plan since the early fall.

## Quotes

In 1944 British Cabinet Minister Sir Oliver Lyttelton noted that: "Japan was provoked into attacking the Americans at Pearl Harbor. It is a travesty on history ever to say that America was forced into the war. Everyone knows where American sympathies were. It is incorrect to say that America was ever truly neutral even before America came into the war on a fighting basis."

Just after the Pearl Harbor attack, conservative Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg wrote that the United States would have had to yield "relatively little" to pacify Japan. Of Japan he said that "we may have driven her needlessly into hostilities through our dogmatic diplomatic attitudes." "We asked for it, and we got it."

"Eighty percent of the American people in 1940, and I was one of them, were against going to war in Europe against Hitler. Roosevelt did the next best thing. He was our great Machiavelli... He needed something to cause an important trauma and make the Americans' mind up regarding the war. Therefore, he provoked the Japanese into attacking us at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941." – Gore Vidal

[A pre-war Gallup poll showed 88% of Americans opposed US involvement in another European war.]



*Neutrality*

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